



The Land Steward

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINGER LAKES LAND TRUST

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes region Vol. 31, No. 3 • Summer 2019

Land Trust Protects Chemung River Landmark

Jim Pffifer knows the Chemung River well. A self-proclaimed “river evangelist,” Pffifer is executive director of the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the 45-mile river and its tributaries. He is a proponent of sustainable, responsible, and safe recreational usage of the river. “We get people out on the river, and they’re simply amazed by how beautiful it is,” said Pffifer. “And it’s so accessible—it’s a water park in our own backyard.”

If you paddle down the Chemung River between Corning and Elmira—or, less adventurously, drive along State Route 352, which tracks the river’s path—one of the highlights emerges as you come around a bend just past Bottcher’s Landing in the town of Big Flats. A series of glacially carved hillsides and rugged cliffs, known locally as the Palisades, rise 700 feet above the Chemung River

valley. “We’re blessed with a rich variety of waterways and landscapes in our area, and the Palisades really are a unique part of that,” said Pffifer.

A series of glacially carved hillsides and rugged cliffs, known locally as the Palisades, rise 700 feet above the Chemung River valley.

Until recently, much of the Palisades was privately held, with less than 40 acres of the steepest section in public ownership. However, the Land Trust has now acquired a 104-acre parcel that includes the vast majority of the Palisades, as well as nearly 4,000 feet of frontage on the Chemung River, all of which will become public land under state ownership in the future.

The opportunity to protect a cherished Southern Tier landmark in an ecologically critical area was one that the Land Trust was eager to pursue. A critical component of the transaction was a partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), as well

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perspectives

While I didn't actually see it, I knew that the thrashing in the nearby thicket was a black bear—the movements and the associated noise just didn't match the panicked flight of a white tailed deer and it was a location where I knew one had been seen not too long ago. I was standing on the Finger Lakes Trail at the entrance to the Abbott Loop—a popular hiking trail located in Danby State Forest, just south of Ithaca and within the Emerald Necklace—a greenbelt that will ultimately link 50,000 acres of existing conservation land.

While bear are not yet common in the Ithaca area, they have indeed come back to the hill country south of town as well as the entire Southern Tier and the Bristol Hills that extend northward toward Canandaigua and Honeoye Lake. Black bear have been joined by bobcat and fisher in some areas as they too have expanded their range with the re-establishment of forest and the re-wilding of portions of our region.

The areas that support these wild creatures also provide a refuge for people like me who seek large, intact landscapes to stretch their legs and clear their minds. Today, we have an opportunity to create and sustain wild corridors to benefit people

TOM REIMERS



and wildlife alike, working to build these corridors before development fills our scenic valleys.

The Land Trust is committed to connecting and expanding our conservation lands, and climate change is making this an even more compelling challenge. If species are unable to migrate through changing landscapes over time, they will likely perish.

Fortunately, we are making progress, as you can see in this issue of *The Land Steward*. Additional resources and partnerships are needed if we are to succeed in the long run. That's why

we're delighted to be working with partners such as the Wildlands Network—to ensure that our efforts are integrated with a broader initiative that crosses state and national boundaries.

I didn't see the bear this time but I'm glad to know that it was there. With your continued support, we can together ensure that they're still thriving in our region far into the future.

Andrew Zepp
Executive Director, Finger Lakes Land Trust

Land Trust Protects Chemung River Landmark *continued from cover*

as local stakeholders such as Chemung County, the Town of Big Flats, and the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed.

"The Town has always wanted to protect the Palisades, so we couldn't be happier about this outcome," said Big Flats Town Supervisor Ed Fairbrother. "It's been a great pleasure to work with the Land Trust and the DEC to protect a pristine area that is a vital part of our community."

Based on the agreement between the Land Trust and the New York State DEC, the property will eventually be transferred to the state and become part of the Big Flats Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which was established in 2017. Currently, the WMA consists of a 130-acre parcel with frontage on the Chemung River that was previously managed by the state's Department of Corrections. In the coming years, however, the state plans to expand the WMA, with a particular focus on the Chemung River watershed.

In addition to being an iconic local landmark, the Palisades provide habitat for abundant wildlife. Bald eagles soar above the ridges, fish in the river, and nest in the trees along the steep hillsides. Black bear and fishers have been spotted in the river's floodplain and adjacent forests.

The Palisades acquisition represents a key addition to a



growing network of protected lands in the Chemung River watershed. The Land Trust's Steege Hill and Plymouth Woods nature preserves are nearby, while the Land Trust's Kehoe Nature Preserve and The Nature Conservancy's Frenchman's Bluff Preserve are less than a mile downriver. All of these protected lands are critical for sustaining water quality in the Chemung River watershed while supporting recreational usage of the river and surrounding landscape.

"Acquisition of this land will secure significant natural resources while enhancing public access to the river," said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. "We're delighted to have the opportunity to partner with the DEC and local stakeholders on this project."

It's been a good result for the local stakeholders, too. "I love how this partnership with the Land Trust

has worked out," said Pfiffer. "Everyone is seeing the big picture, up and down the river...and there is nothing that gets rid of your stress like sitting by the river and putting your feet in the water."

—Jeff Tonole

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney John Alexander of the law firm Sayles & Evans in Elmira, NY for providing pro bono services in support of this project.

700 Acres of Canandaigua Farmland Protected Forever

*Kim and Scott
Brocklebank*

A recent report published by the American Farmland Trust revealed that between 1992 and 2012, almost 31 million acres of agricultural land in the U.S. were irreversibly lost to development. That is equivalent to losing most of Iowa or New York. This loss included almost 11 million acres of the best land for intensive food and crop production. The Land Trust is working with partners in the Finger Lakes region to alleviate this alarming trend.

Set in a rolling agricultural landscape, Brock Acres—a commodity crop farm located in the towns of Canandaigua and East Bloomfield—is one of many at-risk farms in the region. In recent years, residential development pressure has become intense in this area of Ontario County, given its proximity to the city of Rochester. But thanks to a partnership between the Land Trust, the Town of Canandaigua, and New York State's Department of Agriculture & Markets (NYSDAM), 700 acres of this prime farmland is now permanently protected with a conservation easement.

The farm is owned by Kim and Scott Brocklebank, and together with their son and business partner Travis, it currently produces soy, corn, wheat, and hay. Scott is the 5th generation and Travis is the 6th to operate the farm. The original land was bought in 1858 by the Brocklebank family, who first milked Guernsey cows.

Over the years, the Brocklebank family has upgraded the equipment used on the farm, and purchased larger equipment to help improve efficiency. Most of the equipment is outfitted with satellite positioning (GPS) guidance, which allows for more efficient use of fertilizers and seeds, and also saves time and resources. This is important since the farm drains into Beaver Creek, Mud Creek and Padelford Brook, which is a primary tributary to the Canandaigua Outlet. The Brocklebanks have also worked with the Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District to install various water management projects to ensure that nutrient runoff is captured and kept out of water courses.

Funds for the project came from the state's Farmland Protection Implementation Program (FPIG), administered by

NYSDAM, as well as the Town of Canandaigua. The Land Trust will hold and enforce the easement, protecting the land from ever being developed. Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements that permanently limit future land use in order to protect the land's conservation value. Lands subject to conservation easements remain in private ownership, on local tax rolls, and available for traditional uses such as farming and hunting.

Brock Acres is the fourth farm protected through a partnership between New York State, the Town of Canandaigua, and the Land Trust. The town, with funding from NYSDAM, recently developed an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, which recommends adopting a greenway called the "Padelford Brook Greenway." With the goal of reducing commercial and residential development pressure through rezoning, the greenway would be located in the northern portion of the town and encompass 10,800 acres of farmland.

"The commitment of the Brocklebank family to protecting their farm is outstanding," said Elizabeth Newbold, Project Manager for the Land Trust. "They first started the process with the town in 2012, showing their long-term dedication to preserving their land. This project protects a beautiful farm and the history and legacy of a wonderful family's stewardship of that land."

"It is important to the Brocklebank family to protect our farmland from development because we have seen so much of the land we have farmed in the past become housing developments," said Kim Brocklebank. "If this were to continue there would not be farmland in our area for future generations and for the community to enjoy the beauty of open fields and woods. Farming has been a way of life for our family for six generations and we feel it is important to provide the opportunity to our family to continue farming. Farms provide economic benefits to the community, and open space provides enjoyable scenery for the tourism industry. We are grateful to our town and state for recognizing the need to support the preservation of farmland."

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Tod Sukontarak

Each year, the Land Trust recognizes an individual whose contributions and hard work prove invaluable to the Land Trust's mission. Tod Sukontarak has been volunteering with the organization for the past 20 years. He started by going to work parties where groups of volunteers did trail maintenance and upkeep of Land Trust properties. "There were lots of garlic mustard pulls," Tod recollected while showing me around his small homestead. Walking around Tod's yard, you can see the care that he and Sarah, his wife, have put into their home. An old oak tree shades their house, while other parts of their yard have multiple garden beds and native plantings. Their home happens to border the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve in West Danby. Over the years, Tod got more involved with projects at the preserve, eventually taking on the task of mowing the trails. "Forget how that happened," Tod said when asked how long ago he started mowing.

Over a cup of coffee, Tod talked about other projects he's been a part of at Lindsay-Parsons over the years, including building the footbridge and kiosk by the main trailhead. He likes using his carpentry skills for projects like this, and over his years of volunteering for the Land Trust, has gotten to know the staff well. "They're all good people," says Tod, and adds that the people are one of the reasons that he stays involved.

Jason Gorman, Nature Preserve Manager for the Land Trust, notes that Tod's mix of carpentry skills, construction, and knowledge of the natural world make him a great volunteer. "FLLT is very lucky to have him as a neighbor."

Luckily for the Land Trust, Tod and Sarah don't seem



like they will be leaving anytime soon. "This will always be home," Tod says.

Thank you, Tod, for your years of service at our Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve!
—Alli Sribarra

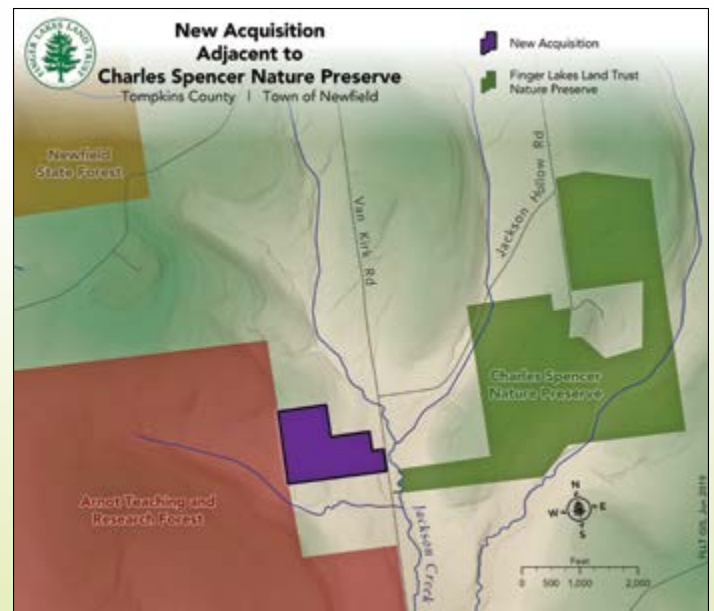
Acquisition Helps Maintain Habitat Connections Within Ithaca's Emerald Necklace

The recent acquisition of 38 acres of forest will help ensure that wide ranging animals such as black bear and bobcat will continue to wander through Ithaca's Emerald Necklace.

Located in the town of Newfield on Van Kirk Road, the property borders Cornell University's 4,000-acre Arnot Research Forest and is part of a habitat corridor that leads to the Land Trust's nearby Charles Spencer Nature Preserve.

Situated in the Susquehanna River watershed, the land was acquired from Donna Callais, who generously agreed to sell the property for less than its fair market value. The land hosts hardwood forest that features mature oaks and maples. It will now be managed in conjunction with the Charles Spencer Nature Preserve, a 265-acre property with fields, woods, and frontage along Jackson Hollow Brook.

This latest addition to the Emerald Necklace comes as the Land Trust enters its second decade working on this project. The Emerald Necklace is an effort to link 50,000 acres of existing public conservation land extending through the hills around Ithaca. The necklace is recognized as a priority project within New York State's Open Space Plan and it features two Audubon-designated Important Bird Areas and several dozen county-designated Unique Natural Areas.



The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Beth Reiter of the law firm Guttman & Reiter in Ithaca, NY for providing pro bono services in support of this project.

State Grants Support Finger Lakes Water Quality Initiative and Southern Tier Public Access Project

The Land Trust was recently awarded \$48,500 in grant funding through the New York State Conservation Partnership Program. The program is funded through the State's Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

This year, more than \$2.2 million in Conservation Partnership Program grants were awarded to 47 nonprofit land trusts across New York. "Land trusts make a real difference in local communities, maximizing public and private dollars to protect and preserve New York's natural resources," Governor Cuomo said. "Through the Environmental Protection Fund, New York is bolstering our extensive network of land trusts that provide support for environmental and open space programs, generating revenue, creating jobs and ensuring a cleaner and healthier New York."

The Land Trust was awarded \$20,000 to move forward with a water quality initiative. In response to the rising threat of toxic algae in our lakes, the Land Trust is systematically and strategically developing and implementing new



programs that both complement existing efforts and leverage additional resources.

Staff are meeting with partners such as the Finger Lakes Institute and peer organizations such as the Potomac Conservancy as part of developing a conservation strategy. As these programs take shape, the Land Trust will share new educational resources for the public and work with partners to design and complete demonstration projects that reduce the runoff of nutrient-rich waters to our lakes.

A \$28,500 grant will help the Land Trust invest in public access improvements at its Steege Hill Nature Preserve, located between Elmira and

Corning in Chemung County. The FLLT will use the grant and additional funding to install a new parking lot and interpretive kiosk at the 794-acre preserve. These improvements will increase safety, accessibility, and educational opportunities, resulting in a better user experience across all ability levels.

"We're grateful for the New York State Conservation Partnership Program," said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. "This important program continues to meaningfully impact our work within the Finger Lakes region and conservation efforts across the state."

Goodbye to Friend and Board Member Tom Walsh

Tom Walsh, dedicated Finger Lakes Land Trust board member and our dear friend, passed away on May 10 following a long battle with cancer.

Professionally, Tom served as Special Counsel to the Chancellor at Syracuse University where he held the position of Executive Vice President for Advancement and External Affairs for nine years. Tom loved the theater and began his SU career as dramaturge for Syracuse Stage. He served on the boards of Light Work and the Everson Museum of Art and the advisory panel for the New York State Council on the Arts.

Tom also loved Skaneateles and found joy in the abundant beauty of the Finger Lakes. His dedication to the FLLT's mission served as an inspiration to staff and board members alike. We all benefited greatly from his quick wit, sage advice, and warm smile.

Tom is survived by his wife Maureen, his daughter Margaret, and his dog and companion Edgar. We will miss him dearly.

Skaneateles
Lake

SCENES

from Around Our Region...

PATTY WEISSE

40 people joined us at the Hinchcliff Family Preserve in Spafford, Onondaga County for the first hike in our 30 for 30 anniversary hike series.

Grimes Glen County Park in Naples, Ontario County, where the Land Trust holds a conservation easement.

NIKIL NAGANE

MARIE READ



Young explorers on the trail at the Steege Hill Nature Preserve in Big Flats, Chemung County, for the second 30 for 30 anniversary hike.



Volunteers have been busy preparing a new preserve for public access on Owasco Lake in Cayuga County.



A Great Blue Heron rookery at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve in West Danby, Tompkins County



BETSY DARLINGTON

Legacy Gift Establishes Tapan Mitra Preserve

The Finger Lakes Land Trust recently renamed its Cayuga Inlet Conservation Area the Tapan Mitra Preserve in honor of the late Dr. Tapan Mitra, a leading economic theorist and long-serving Cornell professor.

His impressive body of work shaped both his discipline and his department, into which he recruited some of the institution's most prominent economists. His commitment to students rivaled only his concern for the environment. "How a society uses up natural resources currently can have enormous effects on the well-being of future generations of that society, including generations still unborn," he stated in a 2016 article.

During his life, Dr. Mitra collaborated with the Finger Lakes Land Trust to identify key priorities of the organization as a part of his estate planning process. He was inspired by the experience of local math teacher, Dave Bock, whose family donated what is now the Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve. This collaboration would lead to a \$200,000 bequest toward creating the Tapan Mitra Preserve.

"The Tapan Mitra Preserve is a jewel in the Emerald Necklace, named to honor Dr. Mitra's thoughtfulness and generosity," asserted Executive Director, Andy Zepp

The Tapan Mitra Preserve features over one mile of frontage along Cayuga Inlet and protects a short but critical section of the Finger Lakes Trail. It borders over 2,000 acres of open space, including a Cornell Botanic Gardens natural area and Robert H. Treman State Park, which connects through the Land Trust's

Lick Brook Gorge preserves to Buttermilk Falls State Park. The network is a popular destination for residents, visitors, and thru-hikers alike, and is even accessible by bus from the Cornell campus.

"The Tapan Mitra Preserve is a jewel in the Emerald Necklace, named to honor Dr. Mitra's thoughtfulness and generosity," asserted Executive Director, Andy Zepp. "It is our hope that through Dr. Mitra's bequest, his memory will forever be associated with the natural areas for which Ithaca and the Finger Lakes are renowned. In that way, his legacy will benefit our community long into the future."

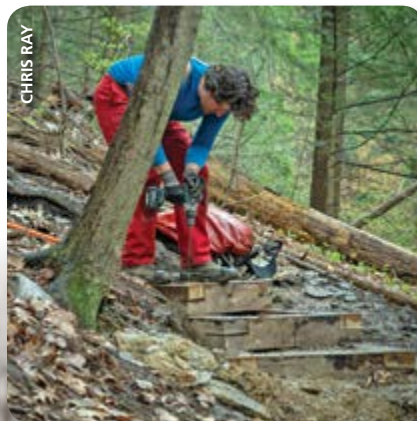
Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook Receives Much-Needed Trail Improvements

IN April, the Land Trust began a vital project to renew the eroding trails at the 26-year-old Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook in Ithaca. The Adirondack Mountain Club's professional trail crew was hired to reconfigure and stabilize the steep blue trail along Lick Brook gorge. This trail connects the preserve with Buttermilk Falls and Robert H. Treman state parks via the Finger Lakes Trail. Additional work is being completed by Land Trust staff and volunteers.

The crew rerouted the existing trail, creating new switchbacks to make the trail more sustainable. This work will prevent future erosion, better define the trail, and make it easier for hikers. Wooden box steps, built with untreated black locust lumber, were installed to help hikers navigate the steep hillside. The new trail design reveals a small waterfall located along the far side of the trail. The blue trail is now 1/10 mile longer and is much easier to follow.

The Land Trust is thankful for project support from Tompkins Trust Company, the Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Tourism Capital Grant, Fields Pond Foundation, New York's Environmental Protection Fund and

the NYS Conservation Partnership Program administered by the Land Trust Alliance, and the Howland Foundation as administered by the Community Foundation of Tompkins County, and many generous individuals throughout the region.



CHRIS RAY



CHRIS RAY

Invasive Species Control Efforts Underway at Land Trust Nature Preserves

USDA Battles Emerald Ash Borer at the Land Trust's Houghton Land Preserve

In June, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released an experimental biopredator of the emerald ash borer (EAB) on the Land Trust's Houghton Land Preserve in Corning. EAB is an invasive wood-boring beetle native to Asia that is threatening ash trees throughout North America. The larvae feed under the bark of ash trees, cutting off the transport of nutrients, and resulting in tree death over a period of several years. EAB is difficult to detect but evidence has been found on numerous Land Trust preserves in the region. As it spreads, federal and state agencies are seeking management tools that would reduce EAB populations and their impact on ash trees.

USDA scientists are currently evaluating three parasitoids (small stingless relatives of ants and wasps) from China for biological control of EAB in the U.S. The *Tetrastichus planipennisi* species was released at the Houghton Land Preserve by attaching small chunks of parasitized ash to live

Michael Aita, USDA Plant Protection & Quarantine Officer, attached chunks of ash containing a biopredator to infected ash trees at the Houghton Land Preserve in Corning.



CHARLIE SWAIN

ash trees where EAB is present. The female parasitoid lays eggs inside the EAB larvae, eventually killing their host.

The Land Trust continues to monitor ash tree health on its nature preserves in the Finger Lakes region. Any findings of the emerald ash borer should be reported to nature preserve manager Jason Gorman by calling (607) 275-9487. Adult emerald ash borers emerge from beneath the bark of ash trees in late May through mid-July. They create a D-shaped exit hole as they chew their way out of the tree. Trees attacked by EAB have distinct S-shaped galleries (tunnels) beneath the bark. More information on EAB can be found at www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis.



Student volunteers are helping the effort to control swallow-wort at the Owasco Lake Preserve in Cayuga County.

Biocontrol for Swallow-Wort Released at Owasco Lake Preserve

Researchers from State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Wells College, SUNY Cortland, and Cornell University are evaluating the potential of *Hypena opulenta*, a moth approved for release in North America, to act as a biocontrol for the highly invasive swallow-wort plant.

The Land Trust's Owasco Lake Preserve in Cayuga County was chosen because of its extensive forest population of swallow-wort. The moths were released on the preserve at the end of June and will be monitored through the fall of 2022. Researchers and students from the four colleges will be checking on plant density and seed production for evidence of the moth's effectiveness.

Hypena opulenta feeds exclusively on the leaves of pale and black swallow-wort, and went through multiple tests conducted by the USDA to ensure its safe release in North America. In captivity, the moth has caused significant defoliation of the plant. If proven successful, it will be the first source of significant herbivory on swallow-wort in North America.

Tom Reimers Trail Dedication Planned for September 20th

Our longtime friend Tom Reimers passed away on January 23, 2019 at Hospicare in Ithaca with his friends by his side. Tom was involved with the Land Trust since its incorporation in 1989. He served many volunteer roles including board president, nature preserve steward, photographer, and trip leader, and sat on several committees throughout the years. The Land Trust will dedicate the loop trail at the Thayer Preserve in Ithaca in his memory on **September 20th at 3 p.m.** The Thayer Preserve was Tom's favorite, and he spent many years there as a volunteer steward, carefully maintaining the land he loved. This event is open to all Tom's friends, acquaintances, and anyone who would like to honor his memory. More information will be posted on our web site at flt.org/events.



TOM REIMERS

Our appreciation for gifts in honor of...

Beth Campbell
FROM
Linda Minde

Mark Chao
FROM
*Tom Divers and
Nita Irby
Ken Kemphues and
Diane Morton
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Laurie Aman

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Our deepest gratitude for thoughtful gifts in memory of...

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*Kenny and Kelly
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Patty Weisse*

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FROM
Cory Ward

memory

DID YOU KNOW... you can save lands and waters during your lifetime with a gift from your IRA?

If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can make direct distributions of up to \$100,000 per year from your IRA to the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

These distributions can be counted towards your Required Minimum Distribution, and you won't need to include the distribution as part of your taxable income. A direct distribution to the Land Trust can result in lower taxable income and may allow you to remain in a lower marginal tax bracket.

Please consult your tax advisor to learn more about how both **you and the Land Trust** can benefit from gifts of assets during your lifetime.

*To learn more,
contact Kelly Makosch
at the Land Trust office at
(607) 275-9487*

Reconnecting a Fragmented Landscape

Many millennia have passed since North America was a true wilderness. Even before European settlement, Native Americans altered the landscape with farming, hunting, roads, and diversion of waterways. Then, after the arrival of explorers and colonists, burgeoning population growth and economic expansion accelerated these changes.

Now, the Finger Lakes region is home to more than 1.2 million people. Our ubiquitous influence has made a patchwork of the landscape—urban centers, suburban sprawl, dairy farms, orchards, cornfields, vineyards, and remaining wetlands and forests, linked by a few big highways and countless smaller roads, as well as railroads and canals. A similar transformation has unfolded across eastern North America, whose population tops 200 million across the United States and Canada.

As a result, the natural lands of our region, and indeed of the whole continent, have never been so fragmented. Such fragmentation, in turn, has led to several serious and ever-growing threats to ecosystems and wildlife.

Isolation of populations and gene pools. When populations of organisms are broken into small isolated patches, they lose the capacity to withstand and recover from disease outbreaks, food scarcity, catastrophic weather events, and other dangers.

Moreover, the genetic variation of isolated populations first freezes and then gradually declines, leading to risks of inbreeding, lower birth rates, and loss of adaptive potential. As a result, isolation can lead to local or even universal extinction.

Barriers to dispersal and migration. Even under favorable conditions, competition or overcrowding may compel wildlife to range to new areas in order to survive and thrive. Habitat loss and resource scarcity, especially in our era of climate change, make the capacity for successful dispersal and migration all the more imperative. But where suitable habitat exists only in isolated patches, wildlife is either trapped in place or forced while on the move to face mortal threats—low food availability, lack of cover from predators, motor vehicle collisions, and so on.

Edge effects. Fragmentation means less core interior habitat and more area at the interface with other landscape types. Edges tend to favor opportunistic and invasive species. Conversely, reduction and marginalization of core habitat can diminish reproductive success and increase mortality rates of sensitive native species, leading to perilous downward population spirals.

The emergence of this disjointed landscape has had a profound negative impact on many of the most iconic and ecologically important animals of eastern North America, which all need expansive continuous natural habitat in which

to move—mountain lions, lynx, bobcats, wolves, bears, wolverines, fishers, otters, martens, porcupines, moose, elk, and all manner of reptiles, amphibians, and fish as well.

In response to these myriad threats, conservation planners and advocates seek to increase **connectivity** among remaining patches of natural habitats. We can achieve connectivity in various ways.

- Creation of wildlife crossings, including bridges and underpasses, for wildlife to travel safely across roads and other barriers;
- Securing and expanding core habitat on both private and public lands through the creation of nature preserves, parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, and so on;
- Strategic acquisition and protection of lands adjacent to other natural areas, connecting patches and creating broad corridors for wildlife movement;
- Particular focus on expanding protected buffer areas around riparian corridors;
- Creation of incentives for rural landowners to protect their lands from development;
- Restoration of disturbed areas;
- Reintroduction of native plants and animals.

The Finger Lakes Land Trust has made connectivity a touchstone principle of its work. Perhaps most notably, the Land Trust's Emerald Necklace initiative seeks to fill gaps and create connections among

more than 50,000 acres of protected lands around southern Cayuga Lake through strategic acquisitions, partnerships, and agreements with private landowners. Progress toward the ultimate vision of a continuous green corridor around Ithaca means not only room for animals to roam, but also expansion of recreational opportunities and protection of water quality in both the Cayuga Lake and Susquehanna River watersheds.

More broadly, throughout the Finger Lakes region, the Land Trust places strategic priority on identifying and conserving lands adjacent to other protected natural areas, thus ensuring the integrity of existing core habitat and helping restore the vital benefits of connectivity. Indeed, on an even larger scale, the Land Trust is coordinating its work with that of the Wildlands Network and the Rewilding Institute in support of their vision of the Eastern Wildway, an interconnected network of protected lands across eastern North America.

Piecing the landscape back together requires enormous sustained effort, funding, and collective will. We can do our part, starting right here in the Finger Lakes. Parcel by parcel, the Land Trust is transforming the map, turning isolated pixels into convergent green blocks interlaced by protected corridors—and perhaps eventually, connecting into a vast, coherent restored mosaic with all the colors of bygone wild America.

— Mark Chao



BILL BANASZEWSKI

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Summer 2019 Calendar Talks & Treks

Creek Walk for Kids and Families!

Saturday, August 24, 10:00am. Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve, Dryden, NY. Join Sarah Fiorello, Interpretation Coordinator for Cornell Botanic Gardens, for an exploration of what lives under the rocks and in the streambed of the Ellis Hollow Preserve. We'll learn a little about stream health and see what else we can find on the preserve.

Our 30th Anniversary Celebration

Continues! Join us for free guided hikes on our nature preserves now through October. Learn more at fllt.org/30years.

Detailed directions and more info can be found at fllt.org/events. Except in the case of extreme weather, walks go rain or shine. Please check our Facebook page or web site for updates.